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#6

CEMETERY DANCE PRESENTS

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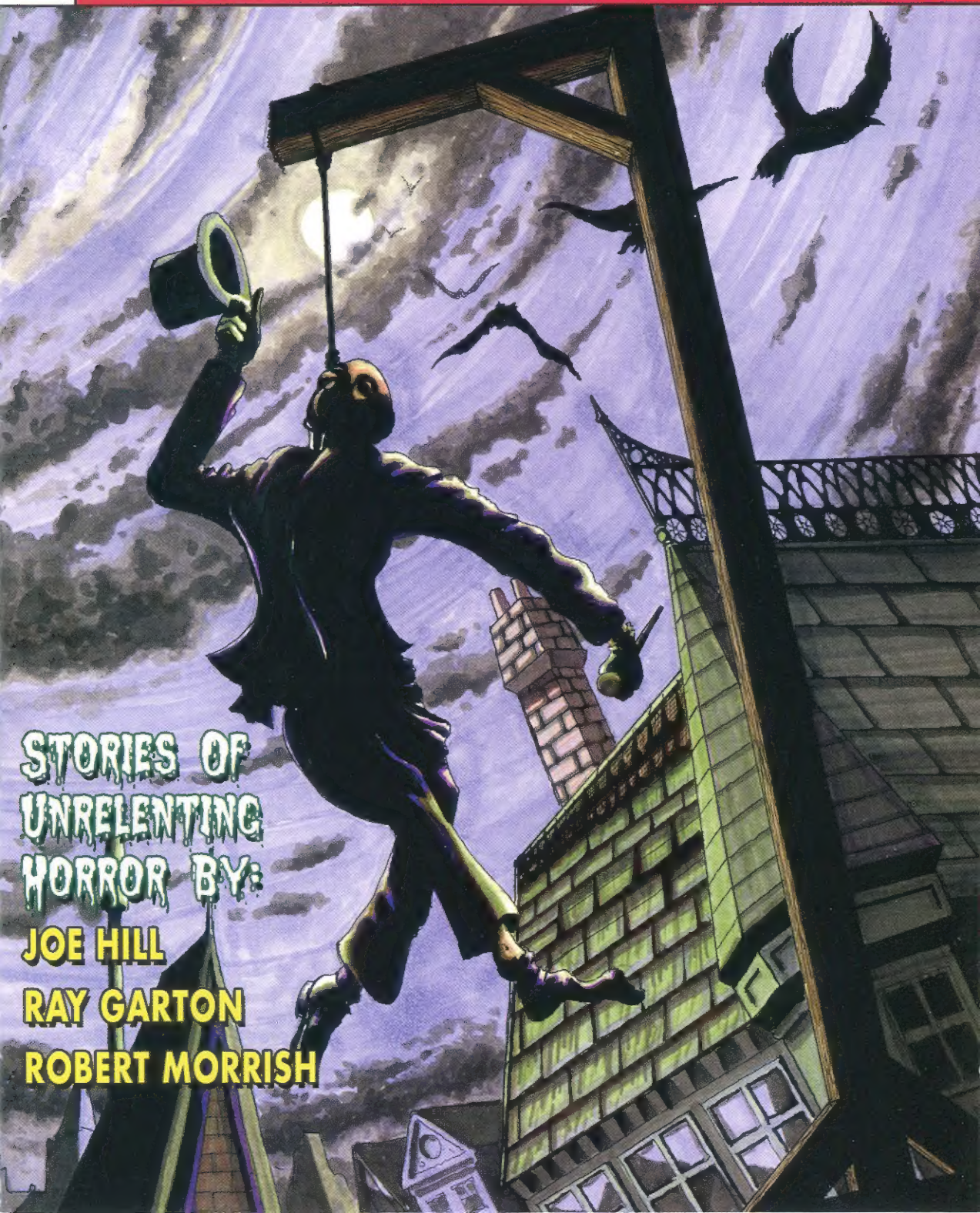
GRAVE TALES

**STORIES OF
UNRELENTING
HORROR BY:**

JOE HILL

RAY GARTON

ROBERT MORRISH



RICHARD CHIZMAR
Publisher/Editor

BRIAN KEENE
Associate Editor

Cover Artwork by
PAUL GROENDES

CEMETERY DANCE PRESENTS GRAVE TALES #6

VOLUME THREE, ISSUE TWO

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Story & Adaptation by Joe Hill

Art by Seth Fisher & Langdon Foss

Lettering by Junemoon Studio

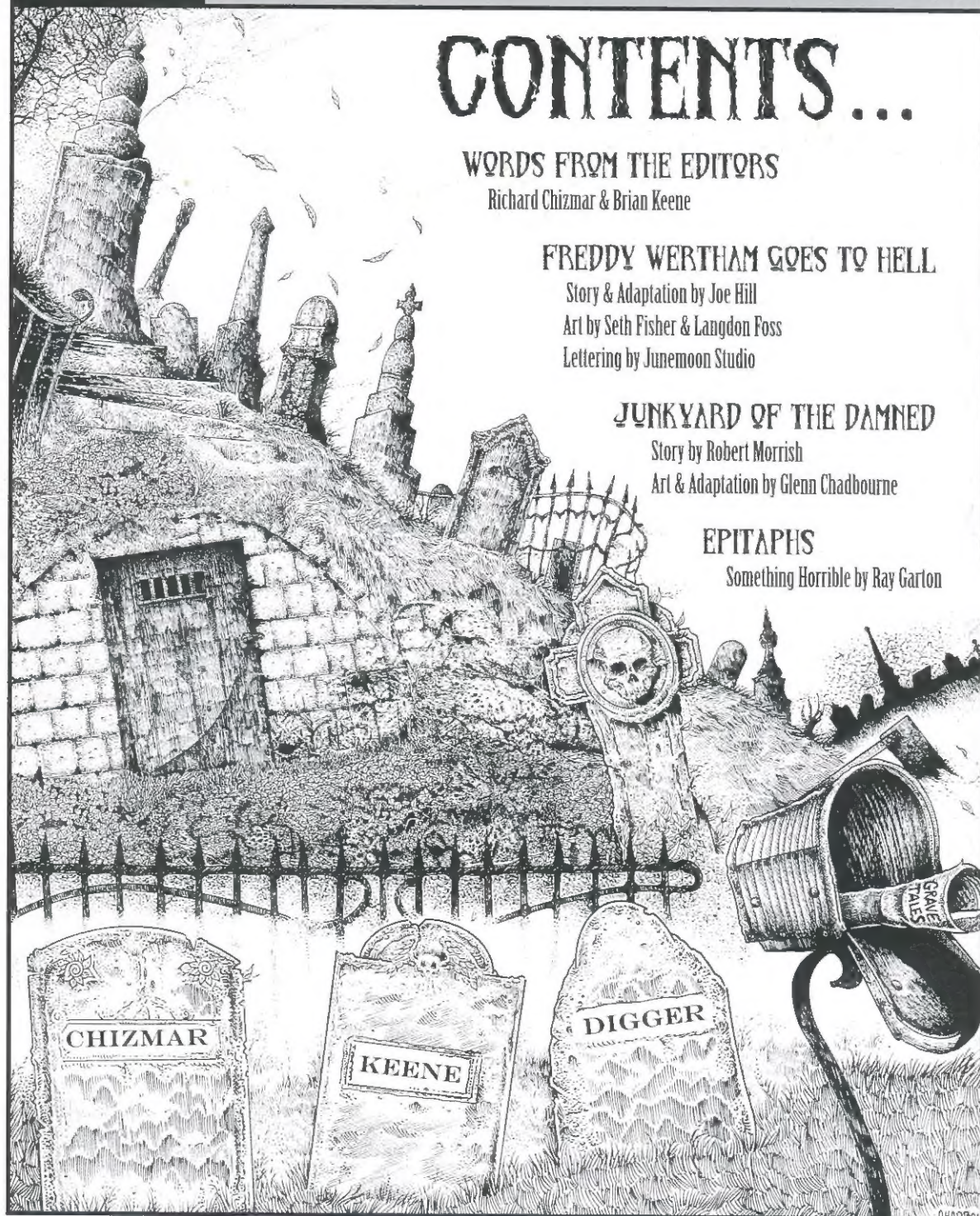
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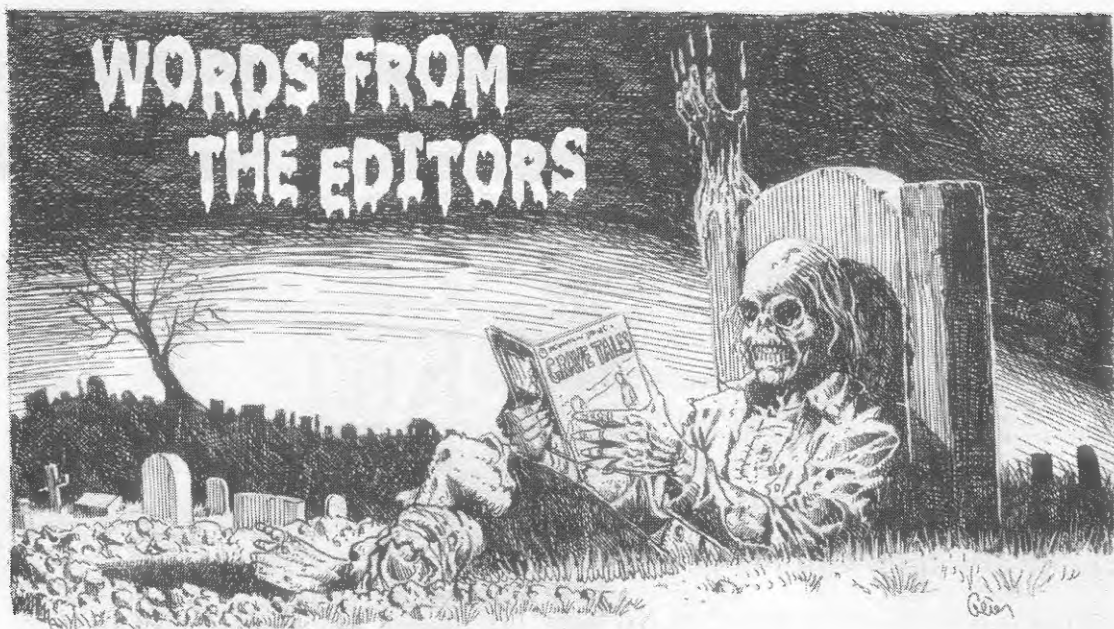
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Welcome back to another issue of *Grave Tales*. We hope you enjoy it enough to come back for more. *Grave Tales* #7 is already at the printer—featuring new work from Joe Hill, Peter Crowther, Ed Gorman, and many others. Look for it in a couple months.

We have a lot of exciting things in store for 2008 and beyond. *Grave Tales* will continue to publish on a regular schedule. We have several standalone graphic novels planned. And maybe even a movie tie-in or two. Please stay tuned at www.cemeterydance.com for more news as it becomes available.

In the meantime, please let us know your thoughts about *Grave Tales*—what you liked, what you didn't like, what you would like to see more of. Drop us a note at: info@cemeterydance.com.

—Richard Chizmar

1 1 1

I'd like to echo Rich's request that you drop us a note with your thoughts. Anybody else remember when the letters page was an integral part of comic books? They were always there, in the back of each issue, and I always read them.

Sure, sometimes the letters page was nothing more than various nitwits jockeying for a No-Prize by pointing out the continuity errors in the previous issue, but if you looked beyond that, there were some real gems. Pros like Harlan Ellison and William F. Nolan used to write in with feedback. Young fans did the same—their names instantly recognizable as some of today's top creators.

The coolest thing about the letters page was that the editors often seemed to respond to the feedback. If you wrote to *House of Mystery* and requested more evil genie stories, and your letter got published, it would usually be accompanied by a note from the editor, saying something corny like, 'Your wish is our command...'

These days, the letters page is an antiquity (just like the back cover advertisement offering a box of army men for a buck). Readers have message boards and other forums to discuss the latest comics. As a result, I think some of that dialogue has been lost. But we'd love to hear from you. Even if you just want more evil genie stories...

—Brian Keene

KILL WHITEY

BRIAN KEENE

From bestselling author Brian Keene comes another novel of dark crime and the supernatural, in the tradition of *Terminal*...

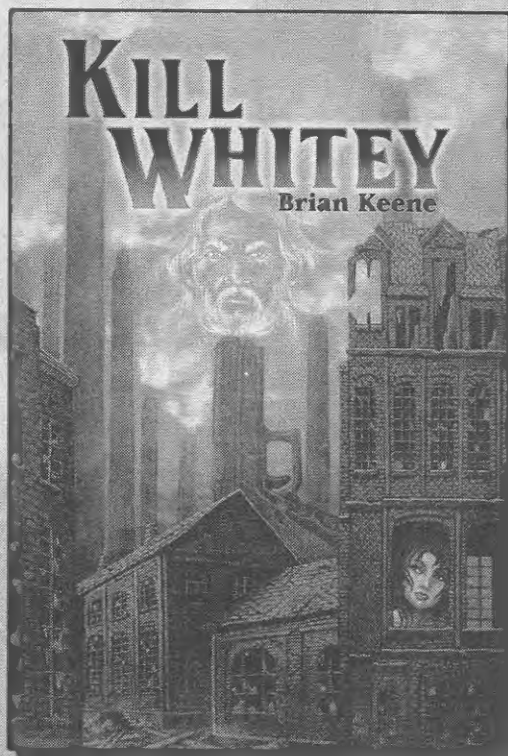
Larry Gibson longed for something different from his days as a dock worker and his lonely nights spent drinking with his friends.

When Larry meets Sondra Belov, a beautiful exotic dancer, he finally gets some excitement in his life—too much excitement.

Now, Larry's friends are dying and he's on the run from the cops, the Russian mob, and a seemingly invincible madman.

And if Larry wants to live another day, he'll have to figure out a way to kill Whitey...

KILL WHITEY...how can you kill someone who cannot die?



Trade Hardcover Edition (\$25)

"The enormity of Keene's imagination is both rare and wonderful."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"This one is a strange mix of gangster story, horror story and romance. Yeah, that's what I said. It works though and works very well... I was hooked by page five, I was captivated by page fifty and completely blown away by the end of the book."

—Dave Dreher, *House of Horrors*



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← Indeterminate amount of time

DREAM-LIKE
VOODOO





FREDDY WERTHAM GOES TO HELL

STORY: JOE HILL ART: SETH FISHER & LANGDON FOSS
LETTERS: JUNEMOON STUDIO

I HAD YOU BROUGHT INTO OUR OFFICES TO GET YOU OFF THE STREET. I SAW THE WHOLE THING YOU KNOW. IT WAS AWFUL.

do artists even use these things?

white-out

black-out

MY OWN FAULT. I COULDN'T STAY QUIET. ONE OF THEM WAS YAMMERING ABOUT SOME IDIOTIC COMIC BOOK. I SAID IT WAS FILTH. THEY PROBABLY THOUGHT I MEANT THEM. AND YOU SAW IT ALL?

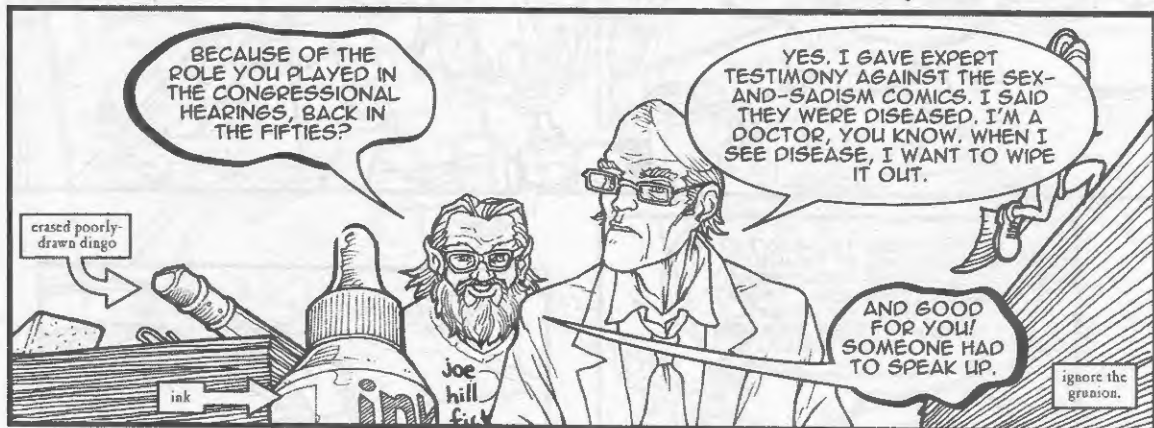
YES. I'VE BEEN WATCHING FOR YOU, DOCTOR.

before

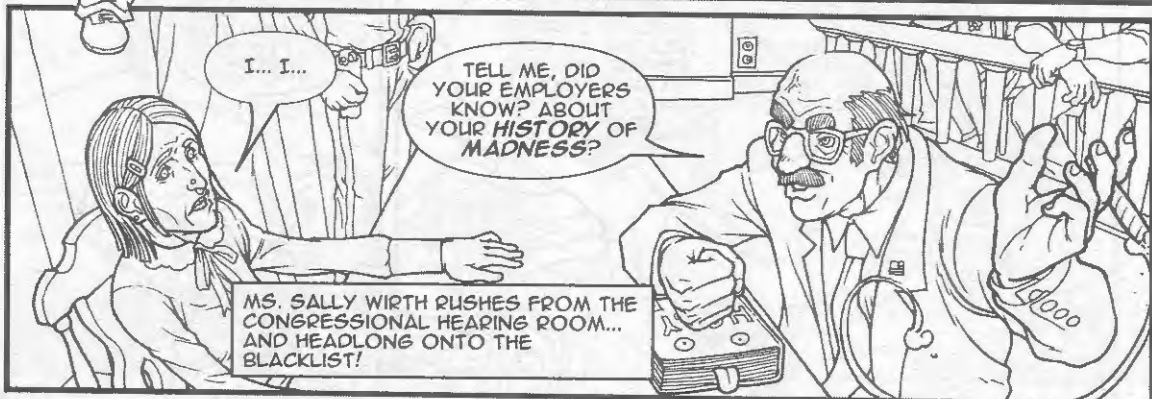
after

YOU WERE?

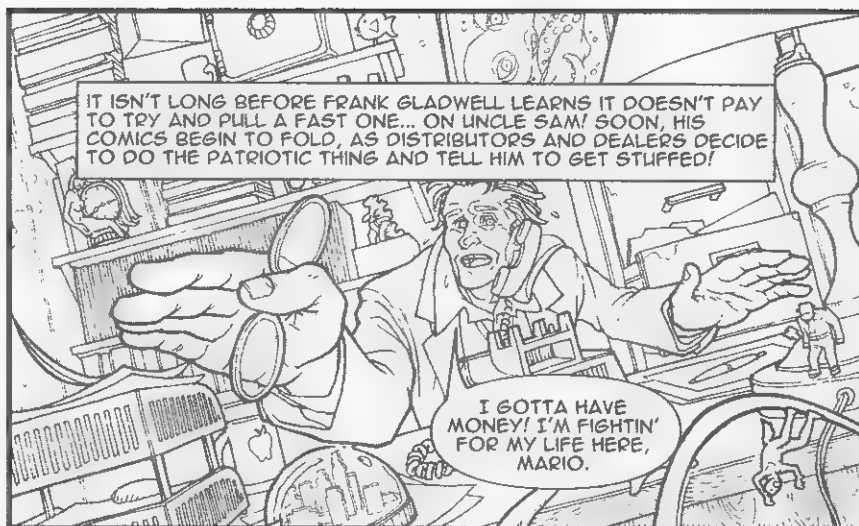
I HEARD YOU WERE GOING TO BE IN THE AREA AND I WAS HOPING TO HAVE YOU IN MY OFFICES FOR A QUICK WORD. WE'RE WORKING ON A PROJECT HERE WHICH I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE YOUR OPINION ON.











IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE FRANK GLADWELL LEARNS IT DOESN'T PAY TO TRY AND PULL A FAST ONE... ON UNCLE SAM! SOON, HIS COMICS BEGIN TO FOLD, AS DISTRIBUTORS AND DEALERS DECIDE TO DO THE PATRIOTIC THING AND TELL HIM TO GET STUFFED!

I GOTTA HAVE MONEY! I'M FIGHTIN' FOR MY LIFE HERE, MARIO.



JUST DON'T BE LATE MAKIN' GOOD ON THE LOAN, OL' BUDDY...

how phones used to look seriously

gift from aunt

SO BOLD... SO SURE OF HIMSELF... SO STUPID!

URK!

IT'S SMASH TIME, MEATHEAD! EEEEEEEE!

I'LL LEARN YOU NOT TO HOLD OUT ON US.

ubiquitous manhole cover



I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK...

QUITE A PIECE OF WORK, ISN'T IT?



WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO MEET THE PEOPLE WHO MADE SUCH A REMARKABLE COMIC POSSIBLE?

I... I SUPPOSE IT COULDN'T HURT...

COULDN'T HURT... HEH HEH... FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY SO. HERE, LET ME INTRODUCE MY TALENTED STAFF. BUT WAIT...

MMM. THAT WAS GOOD SHIT. I LOVE LOOKIN AT COMICS WHEN I'M HIGH. HEY... YOU EVER THINK THIS IS WHY WE DO THE CRAZY THINGS WE DO? CAUSE COMICS ARE A BAD INFLUENCE ON US?

ACTUALLY I THINK IT'S MORE BECAUSE WE COME FROM A HARSH BACKGROUND OF POVERTY AND NEGLECT IN A COUNTRY CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE SATISFACTION OF CORPORATIONS AND THE WEALTHIEST ONE-PERCENT.

TOO BAD I LIKE DRUGS BETTER THAN COMICS, I'D NEVER HURT ANYONE. I'D JUST SIT AROUND AND WHACK OFF OVER VAMPIRELLA!

HEY, LOOKAT! I LOVE THIS COMIC! I THINK THIS IS A NEW ISSUE!

WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH IT? URRRH! DON'T TOUCH IT!

relaxed hair

terrified hair


SO NOW YOU KNOW THE KIND OF SACRIFICE THAT GOES INTO AN ISSUE OF GRAVE TALES. WHEN WE SAY WE'D GIVE THIS COMIC THE SKIN OFF OUR BACKS, WE AREN'T KIDDING!

SAY, THOSE TWO HAD THE RIGHT IDEA. THEY WERE SMART ENOUGH TO DROP THIS MAGGOTY MAG WITHOUT EVEN OPENING IT UP. TOO BAD IT'S TOO LATE FOR YOU!

YOU'RE IN NOW, AND IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, YOU'LL TURN THE PAGE TO OUR NEXT LITTLE FRIGHTMARE!

UNLESS YOU WANT TO WIND UP LIKE THE OTHERS WHO DISRESPECT OUR CREPUSCULAR COMIX... AS MATERIAL FOR THE NEXT ISSUE!

good read



THE WOODS ARE DARK

THE RESTORED
&
UNCUT EDITION

RICHARD LAYMON

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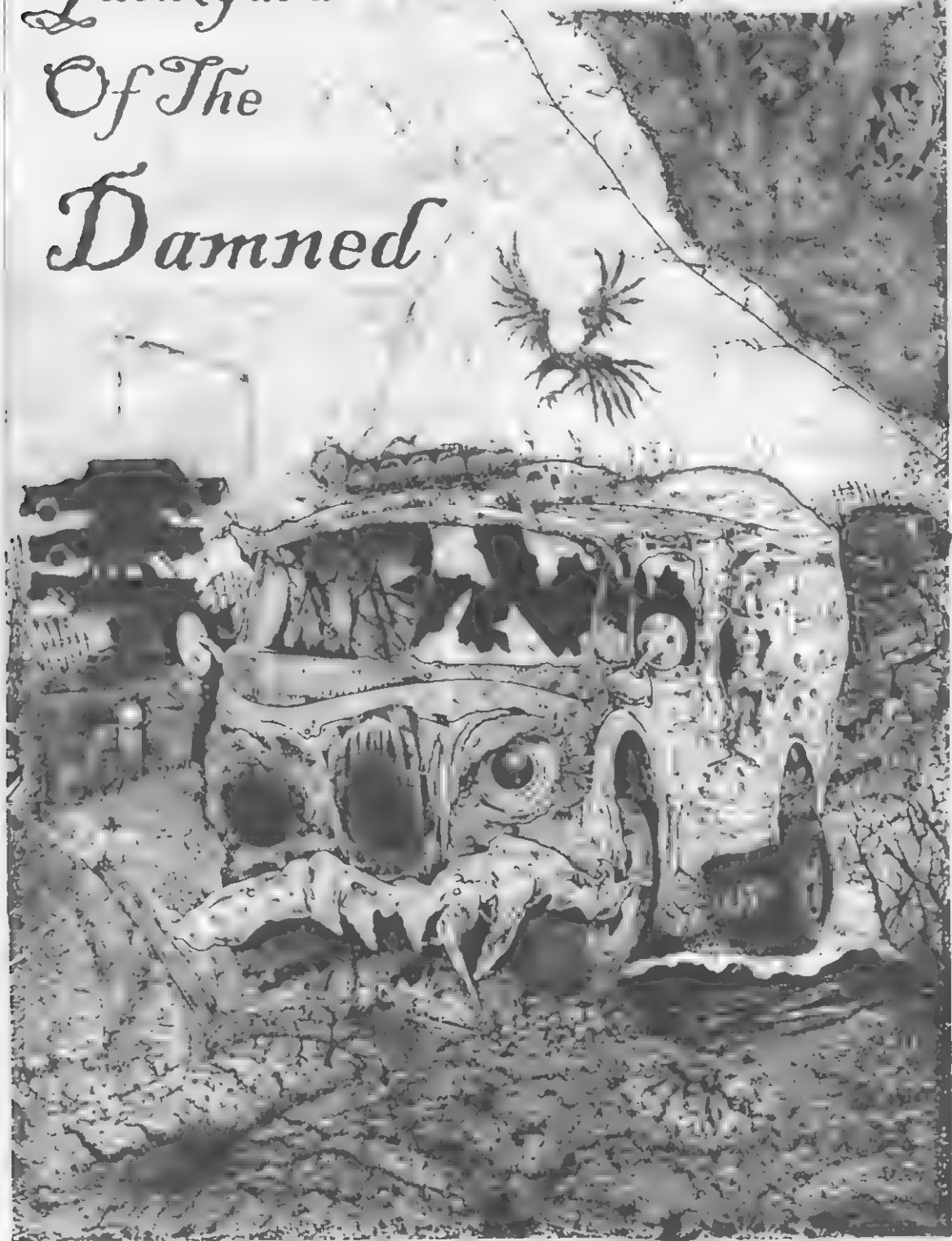
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Junkyard Of The Damned

Story by Robert Morrish

Adapted and drawn by Glenn Chadbourne



From the corner of his eye, Vernon Collins saw a couple ghouls shambling towards him. He quickly hid his pant from view, trying not to look too guilty about it.

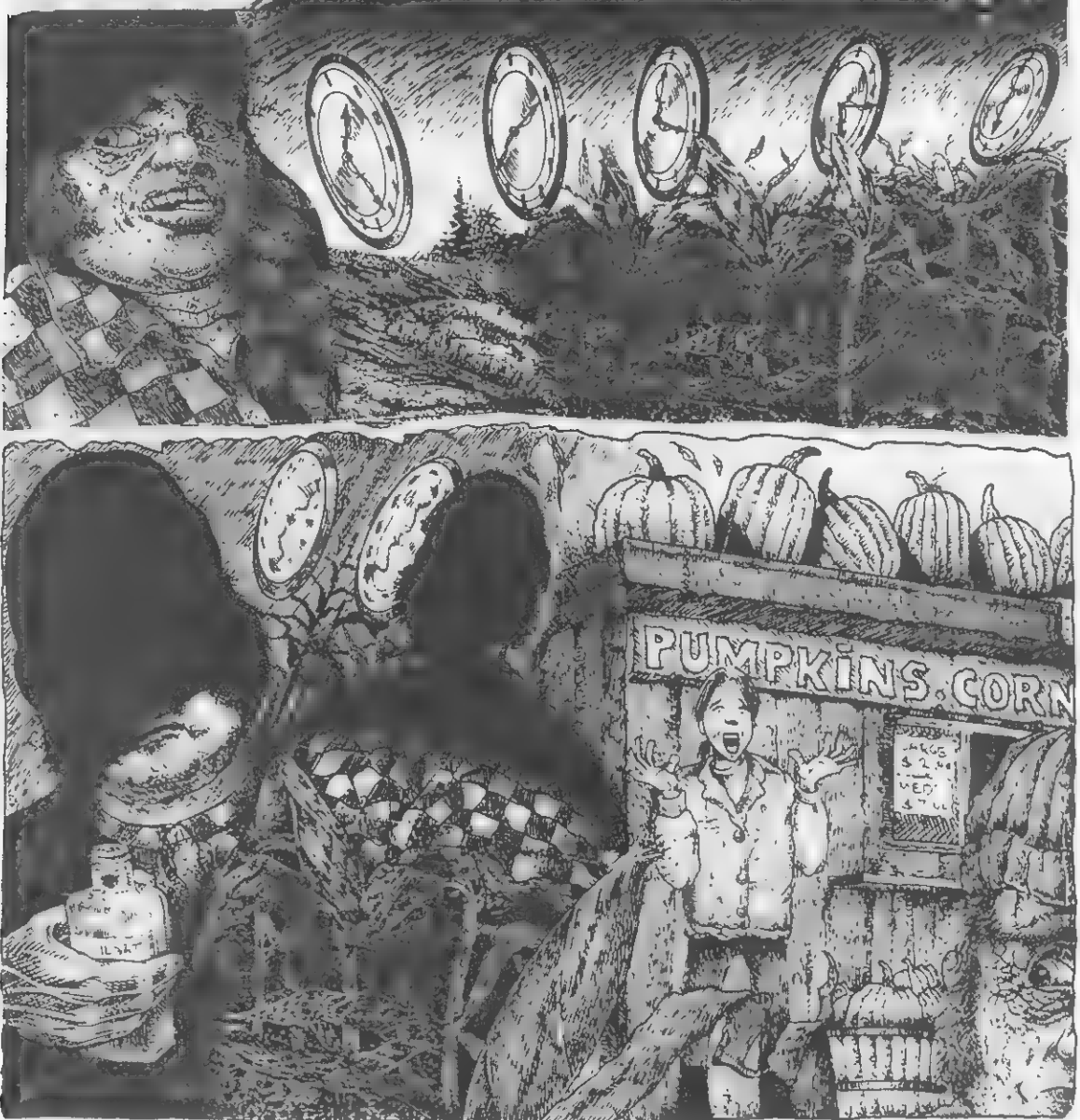
He smiled amiably as they passed, then got back to business, there in the shadow of the corn. He could hear cars pulling in on the far side of the rows, one after another, doors *clunking* shut, excited voices laughing and shouting. There was time for a couple more quick nips before he had to go see what Jerry wanted him to do. There'd be something that needed taking care of. There always was.



It didn't seem right that a father should be taking orders from his own son. An uppity, full-of-himself son, at that. But then again, Vernon had to admit the boy had earned himself a certain amount of respect from his old man.

For close to twenty years, Vernon had been setting up his pumpkin stand every October, selling folks what they needed for Jack O' Lanterns big and small, all grown there in Vernon's own patch. It brought in a little extra money, a little extra to help keep the farm going. Some years, when the weather was bad and business was slow, it was barely worth doing, but Vernon kept at it, more out of habit than anything else.

Then Jerry had come back from college this past summer, with a degree in hand and a head full of big ideas. One of those big ideas was to take the rows of corn next to the pumpkins and carve a maze into them, creating a haunted cornfield during Halloween season. The boy said they could charge a decent admission and make a lot more money than they did through the pumpkin patch. Vernon had rolled his eyes and told Jerry that his big-city ideas just couldn't hold water back here at home.



But the boy kept asking for the answer. Swore that he'd take care of setting it up, about \$100 a month. In the end, Vernon figured what the hell—he could harvest what he was getting for nothing. Not that he was makin' that much money off corn these days anyway.

By the time the boy had heard the boy had everything ready to go—a maze carved into the field, corn planted, and a self-terminating "mouth" in the center,






WHAT'S SO
ALL FIRED IMPORTANT THAT IT CAN'T
WAIT? I'VE GOTTA GET BACK AND RUN THE
SHOW THIS IS GOING TO BE OUR BUSIEST
NIGHT OF THE SEASON!




I CAN'T BE OUT FARTING AROUND WHEN
I SHOULD BE SETTING UP FOR THE BIG
FINALE.






YEAH, YEAH. I'M SURE IT'S SOMETHING
EARTH-SHATTERING, BUT WHY NOW?




CAUSE I ONLY
FOUND OUT
ABOUT IT A
COUPLE DAYS
AGO.



AND YOU BEEN
TOO BUSY TO
TALK TO ME
SINCE THEN,
UNTIL NOW.

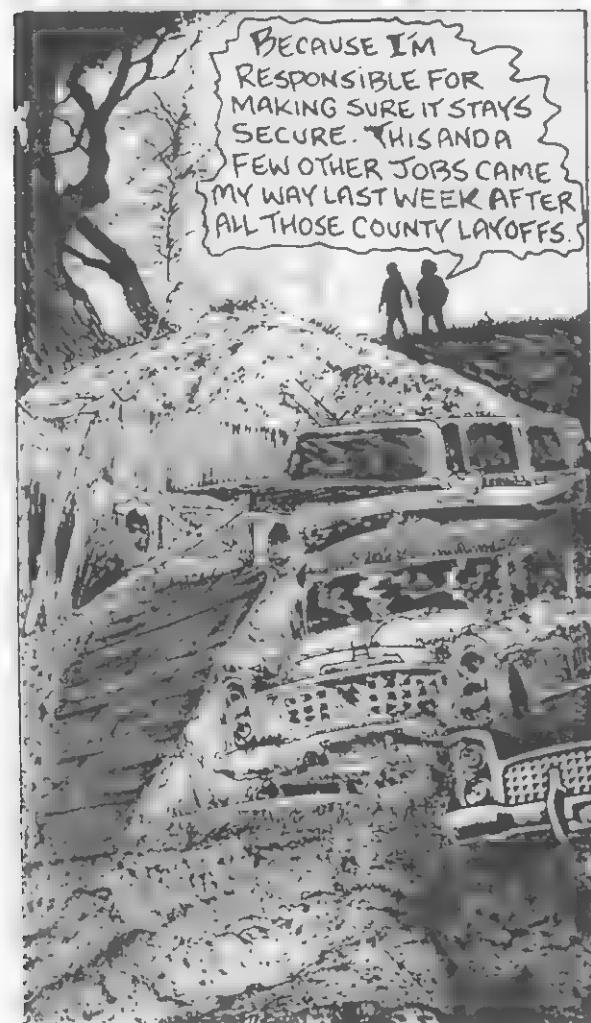
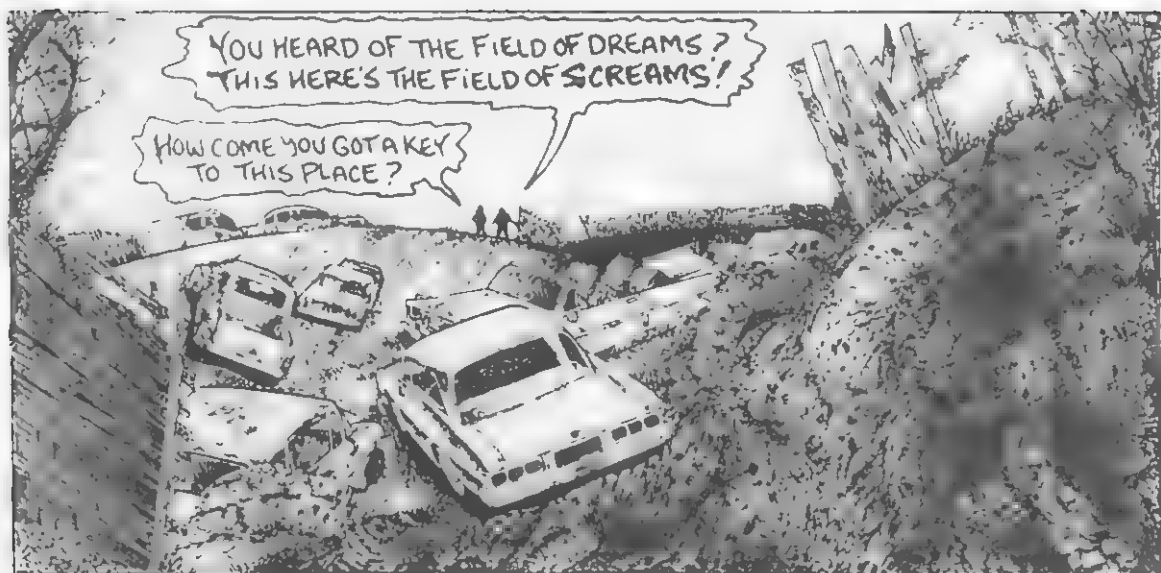
AND 'CAUSE,
WELL, IT'S
HALLOWEEN.
AFTER ALL.



IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO SEE WHAT
I'VE GOT TO SHOW YOU.

BESIDES, THERE
JUST MIGHT BE A BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITY TO BE HAD
HERE.





THESE ARE...
INSTANT HELL IN A COUPLE EXAMPLES.
...DONALD WHITE'S CAR.
...FULL MOON KILLER! STATE LAW REQUIRES POLICE
...CAR THAT ARE INVOLVED
...THEY'RE NEEDED FOR
...THE LOT WHERE THE
...THE LONG-TERM
...VEE-HICLES





EVEN IF A GUY'S BEEN
EXECUTED - WHICH MOST
OF THESE GUYS HAVE BEEN - THEIR
CARS STILL HAVE TO BE KEPT AROUND
BY LAW FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS.
WILD, HUH? A GUY AT THE COUNTY TOLD
ME THERE'S OVER A HUNDRED MURDERS
RELATED TO THESE CARS.

NOW, THIS ONE'S SOMETHING
SPECIAL!

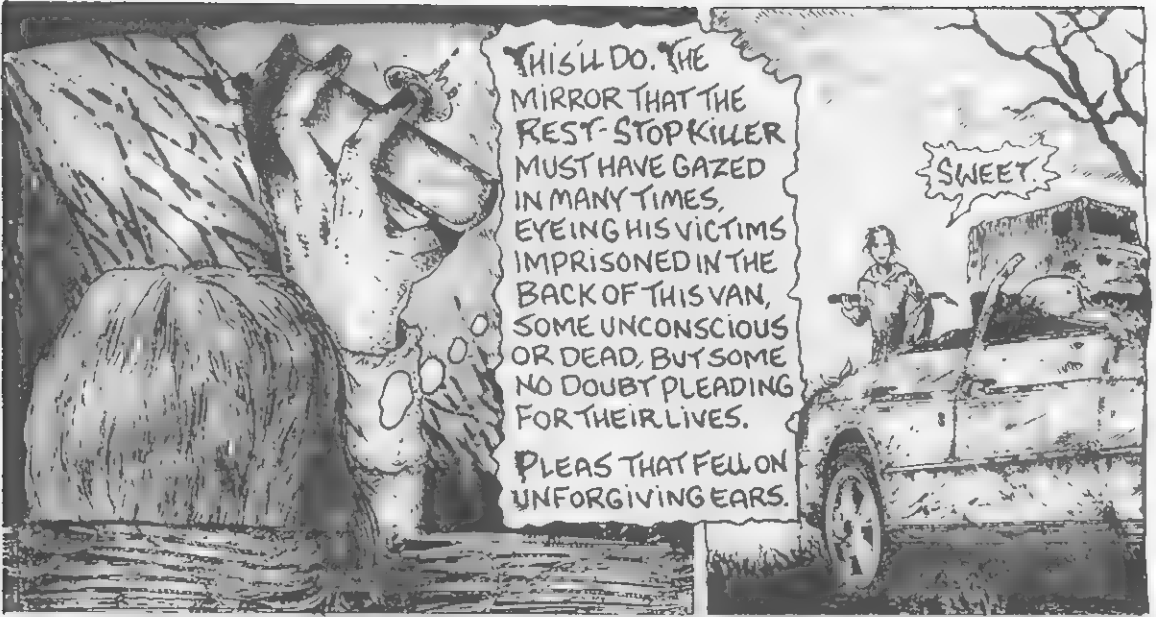


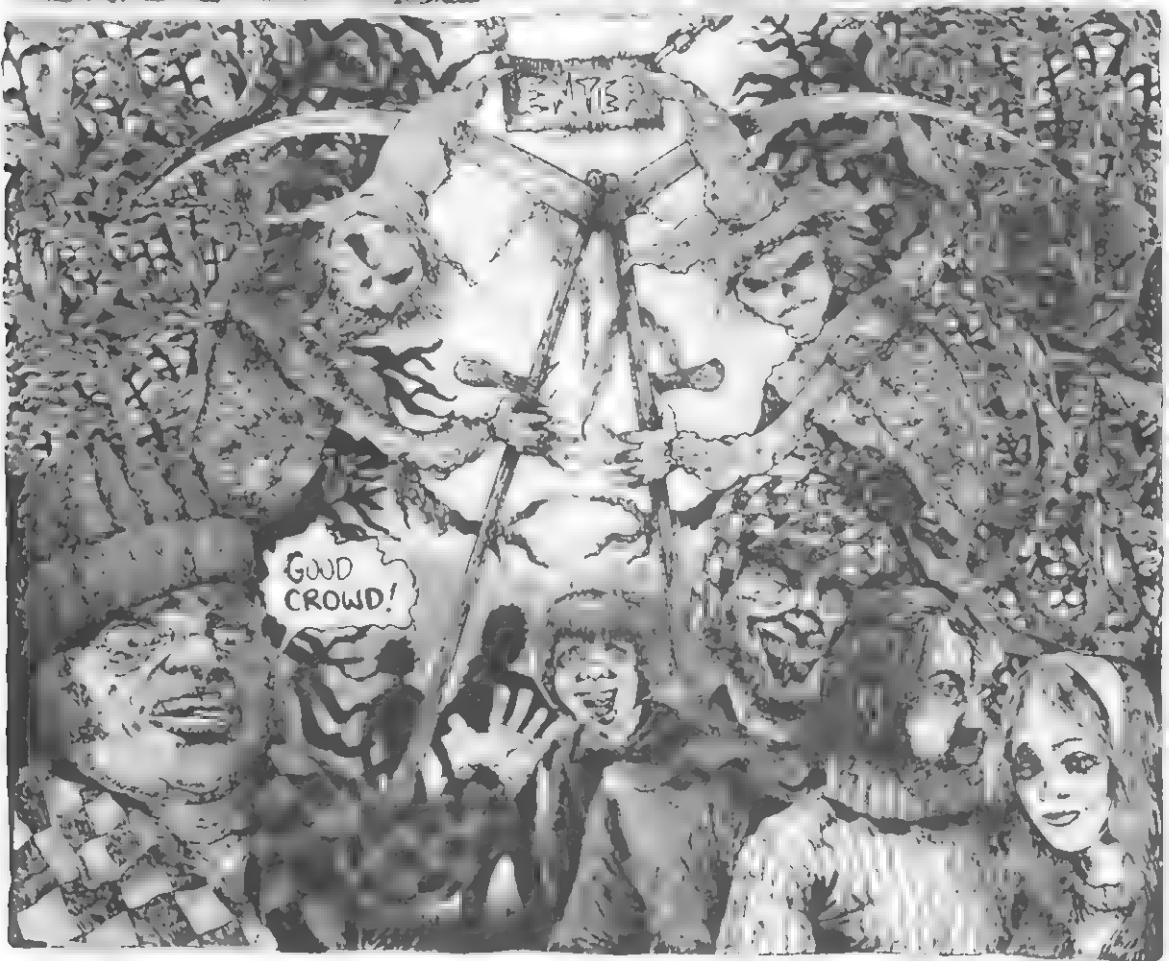
IT BELONGED TO JEREMY WILLIS.
THE REST-STOP STRANGLER.



GO AHEAD HOP IN. SEE
HOW IT FEELS TO SIT IN THE
DRIVER'S SEAT. AND, IF
YOU DARE...

FEEL FREE TO GRAB A
SOUVENIR FOR YOUR
SHOW.









BACK AT THE JUNKYARD

RUMBLE!

SPUR!
BOOM!

WAP!

WISS! BANG! BWAP! PUNT!

E EVIDEN

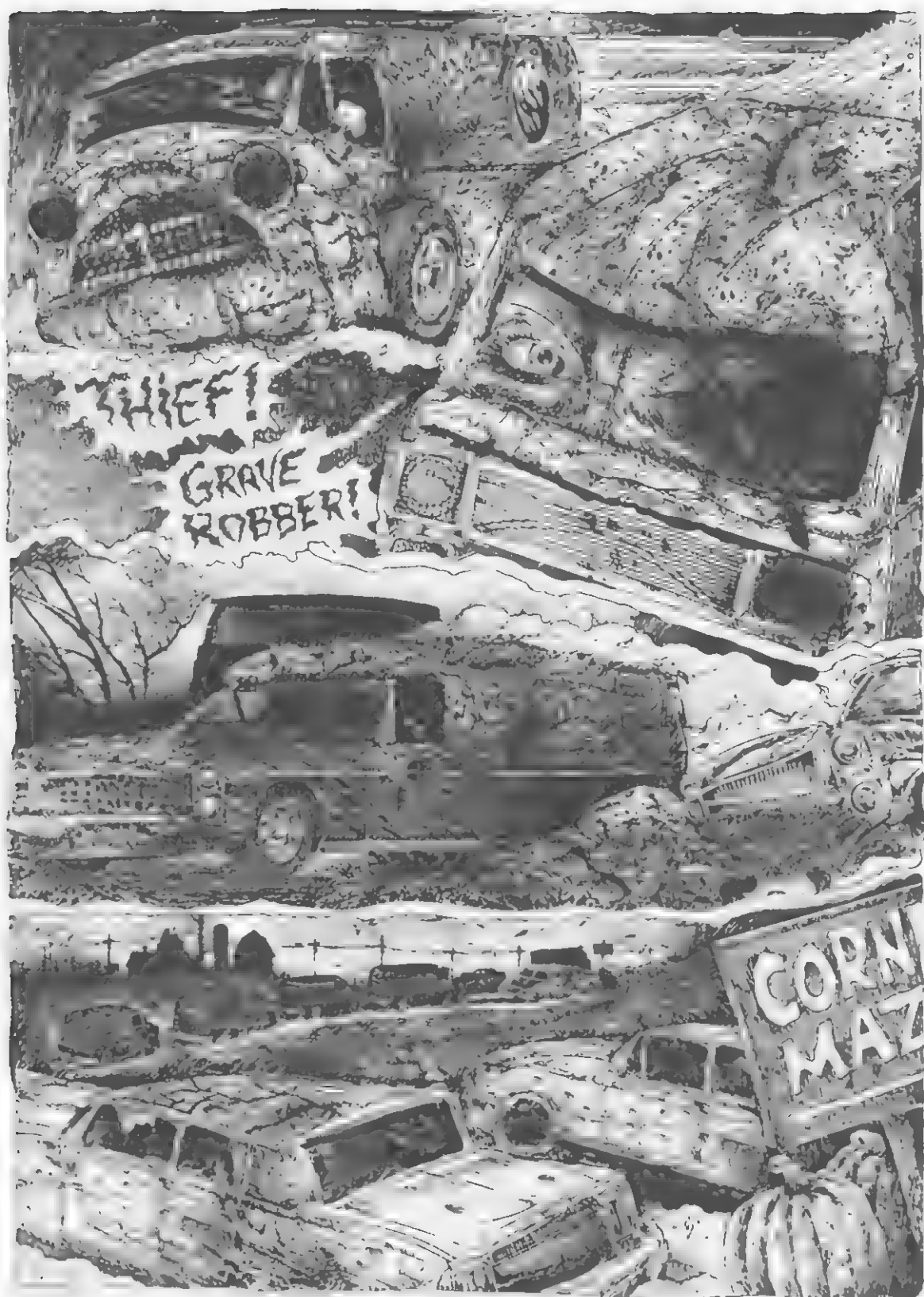
WAP!
WNAUGHN!

POW!

SHUDDER!

BAP!

NOBODY PICKS YOU UP ON THE
BLUE HIGHWAY BABY!!!





THESE ARE THE BEST
SPECIAL EFFECTS I'VE EVER
SEEN!

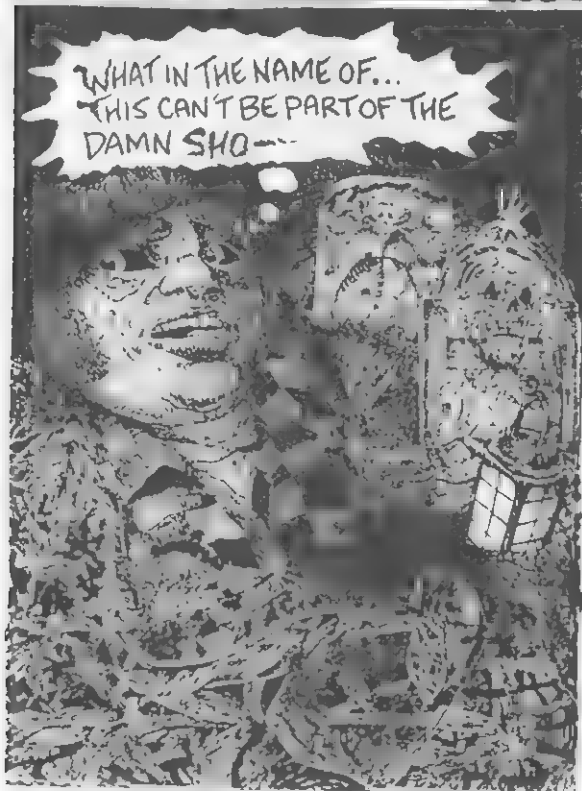
GROSS!

VWAAAAAA

SKRAKCK!

AAA AAA AAA

VWAAAAA





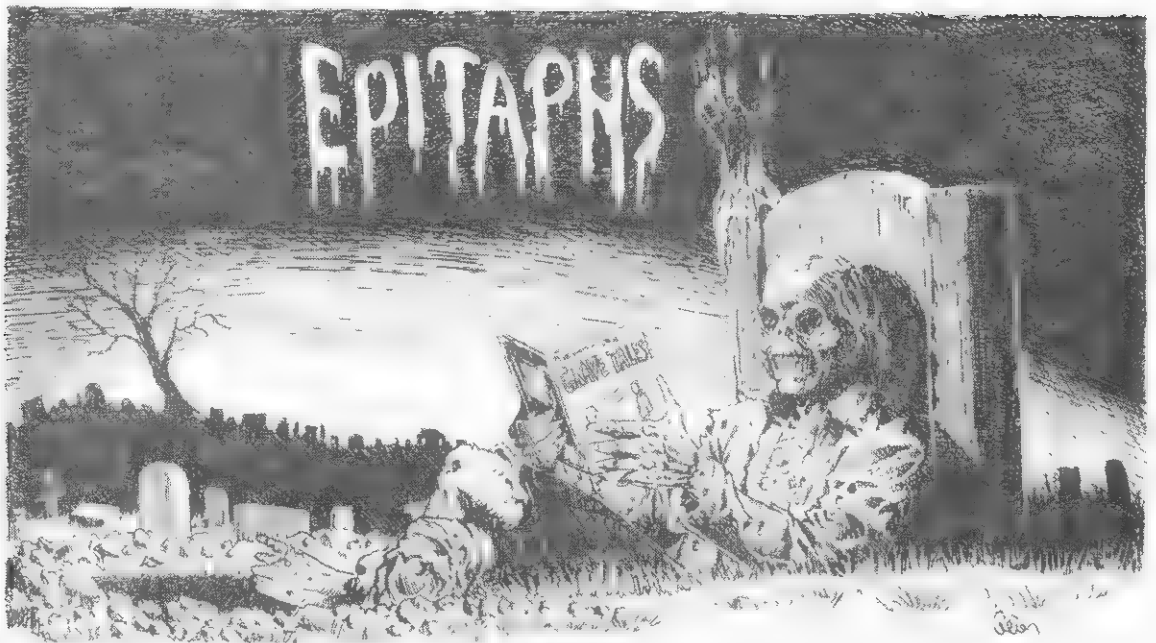




DEATH ROW

DEATH ROW

END



SOMETHING HORRIBLE

BY RAY GARTON

Walter Montgomery washed his hands five times—he washed them, rinsed the soap off, and dried them each time. He flipped the bathroom light off and on fifteen times, then left it off. He shook violently and gasped for breath as he left the bathroom.

Walter's small ground-floor studio apartment at Oak Court Apartments was a cluttered mess. Stacks of newspapers and magazines stood like columns on every side, with boxes of still more set on top of each other. He'd kept a path clear that allowed him to walk through them. The only clearings in the room were around the couch, which opened into a bed, and a couple chairs, all of which faced the small, rabbit-eared television, and in the small kitchen area, allowing him room to move around while he cooked.

A small cluttered desk with a computer on it was pressed up against one wall. The walls were covered by articles and pictures cut out of newspapers and magazines—articles on Area 51, Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster, alien abductions, and secret government experiments.

On his limited income—from disability and selling things now and then on eBay—Walter had to choose between cable TV and an Internet connection. He chose the Internet.

He staggered to the sofa, trembling all over, and flopped down. On the cushion beside him was a small brown paper bag. He put it over his nose and mouth. It made crumpling sounds as it inflated then deflated repeatedly.

Nothing was working. His panic attack had the force of a freight train.

He reached over to the lamp on the end table and turned it off and on fifteen times.

"C'mon, Mickey," he muttered. "Hurry up."

There was a knock at the door just a moment later.

"Walter?" a voice said on the other side. "It's Mickey. Open up."

Walter got up and went to the door, and left the paper bag behind on the couch. He turned the deadbolt back and forth five times, then opened the door.

Mickey walked in, irritated and frowning. "Okay, what is it this time?"

"I-I-I'm sorry, Mickey, I'm having a puh-panic attack."

Mickey's shoulders slumped as he let out a long breath. "Dammit, Walt, I have a life, you know? I have a wife and two kids, and a job, and—"

"I-I know, Mickey, and I'm sorry, I really am. But I duh-didn't want to be alone."

Mickey saw the bag on the couch. "Why aren't you using the bag? You know that helps."

"Oh, yeah, yeah." Walter went back to the couch and sat down, put the bag over his face, and breathed into it.

"Walt, I can't come over here every time you don't want to be alone. I mean, I was just here this morning, for crying out loud."

Walter spoke into the bag: "I know, I know, I just...well, I didn't want to be alone."

Mickey was thirty-four, Walter twenty-nine. Their father had died a little over a year ago after a long battle with spinal cancer. When Walter was eleven, their mother, a depressive alcoholic, had blown her brains out in front of him with their father's .38 revolver. It had been a school day, and Walter had been home sick with the flu. Some of her blood had splattered onto him, and later that day, Mickey had come home from school to find their mother's brains all over the living room wall above the couch, and Walter in the bathroom washing his hands. He'd been washing his hands for hours, and they had been bright pink and raw.

Mickey stood with his hands on his hips and surveyed the apartment. "How can you *live* like this?" he said as he shook his head.

Walter said nothing.

"Look, Walt, you won't keep up with your therapy, you won't take your medication—"

"Those pills make me feel like my head's—"

"Full of cotton, yeah, I know. But they stop the panic attacks, and they lessen the symptoms, so you don't have to go around flipping light switches and turning locks a dozen times." There was an angry edge to his voice.

Walter lowered the bag. He'd stopped shaking and gasping for breath. The panic attacks usually faded when Mickey came over.

Mickey said, "Can't you just... stop?"

"Stop what?"

"All these habits of yours. This hoarding, and washing your hands over and over, and—"

"I can't. You don't understand. If I don't do those things, it feels like...like something horrible will happen."

"What could happen?"

"Something horrible."

"Like what?"

Walter looked at his lap as he thought about it a moment. He finally raised his head and looked at his brother. "Like the end of the world."

Mickey sighed and rolled his eyes. Something caught his eye on the desk—a roll of duct tape. He picked it up and said, "Come here. We're going to fix this once and for all."

"What do you mean?"

"Just come here."

First, Walter reached over and turned the lamp off and on fifteen times. Then he stood and walked hesitantly over to the desk.

"Sit in the chair," Mickey said.

"Why?"

"Just *sit*."

Walter did as he was told.

Standing behind the chair, Mickey tore a strip of tape from the roll and it made a sharp ripping sound. He put it across Walter's chest and began wrapping the tape around him rapidly.

"Wait, what're you doing, Mickey?" Walter said with a tremble of panic in his voice.

Mickey continued to wrap the tape around Walter, pinning his arms to his sides, fastening him to the chair. "If you won't see your therapist and you won't take your medication, then I'm just going to *make* you stop all this stuff."

"No, no, Mickey, no, you can't!"

"I'm going to show you that you can stop all the crazy things you do, and nothing horrible will happen." Once the tape was too thick for Walter to get up, Mickey bent down and bit the strip of tape, tearing it off.

Walter began to cry. "Mickey, you can't do this, you *can't*!"

"I have to, Walt. What I *can't* do is come over here every time you call. I work hard all week, I can't spend my weekends over here calming you down. You know what I was doing when you called? I was watching a football game with my son. It's Sunday afternoon, that's what I *should* be doing. Well, what I'm going to do now is see if I can get that game on your TV, and I'm going to watch it while you sit here and do nothing."

As Mickey spoke, Walter sobbed and struggled against the tape.

"Please don't do this!" he cried. "Plee-heeze don't, Muh-Mickey!"

Mickey bit off another strip of tape and put it over Walter's mouth, but he did not silence him, he only muffled his cries. Mickey went over to the television and turned it on, flipped the dial until he found the game he'd been watching at home. He went to the refrigerator and got a soda, then slumped on the couch to watch the game.

Walter thrashed in the chair, fought against his bonds. He turned his head back and forth as he worked at the tape over his mouth with his tongue.

Half an hour passed. Exhausted, Walter quit thrashing, but continued to cry out into the tape over his mouth, pressing at it with his tongue. The edge of one end had loosened.

Mickey ignored him.

A rumbling explosion of thunder sounded overhead and Mickey started on the couch. He sat up straight and said, "Jeez. It was sunny when I drove over here." He stood and went to the front door, opened it, and stepped outside.

Mammoth black clouds roiled above. A jagged scribble of lightning launched across the sky, and another crack of thunder rattled the windows.

"Wow," Mickey said as he came back inside and closed the door. "That was sudden. On the way over here, I didn't see a cloud in the—"

The earth rolled beneath his feet, and he nearly fell. Stacks of magazines and newspapers fell over. The rolling went on and grew worse.

Walter screamed into the tape, pushed at it with his tongue. Finally, half of it loosened, allowing him to speak.

"It's happening!" he screamed. "It's happening!"

The floor ripped open and a gout of flames belched up into the apartment.

Mickey cried out as he fell over.

Walter went on screaming, "It's happening! Let me go! It's happening!"

The ceiling collapsed and a Barcolounger dropped on top of Mickey.

Windows shattered and walls cracked, and the newspapers and magazines went up in flames. Fire spread through the apartment rapidly as the earth continued to rock and open up.

Walter's final cries were gibberish as more furniture from the apartment overhead fell through the ceiling.

Flames engulfed the room.

The brothers died together.





THE SECRETARY OF DREAMS

Volume 2

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KING**

ILLUSTRATED BY
**GLENN
CHADBOURNE**

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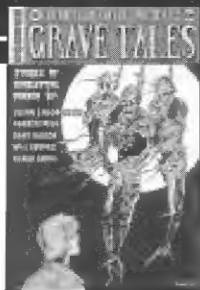


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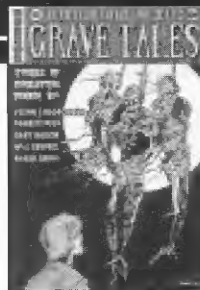
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GRAVE TALES COMIC



Subscribe today!



If you were a fan of the old Warren comics (*Creepy[™]* and *Eerie[™]*) and the legendary EC horror books (such as *Tales From the Crypt[™]* and *The Vault of Horror[™]*), you will absolutely love *Grave Tales*! This is good, old-fashioned horror, folks!

Past issues have featured stories from Richard Laymon, Edward Lee, Rick Hautala, Al Sarrantonio, Nancy A. Collins, Thomas F. Monteleone, and other masters of horror!

For future issues, we've already lined up contributions from Jack Ketchum, Ray Garton, William F. Nolan, Stewart O'Nan, Tom Piccirilli, Ed Gorman, Richard Laymon, Douglas Clegg, Joe Hill, Rick Hautala, Al Sarrantonio and Kealan Patrick Burke!

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